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# PREFACE

121 IT has been my object in writing this book to make it, not merely a record of the customs and beliefs of a people, but also a demonstration of anthropological method. The great need of anthropology at the present time is for more exact method, not only in collecting material, but also in recording it, so that readers may be able to assign its proper value to each fact, and may be provided with definite evidence which will enable them to estimate the probable veraciousness and thoroughness of the record.

With this idea in my mind I have tried to describe as fully as possible the way in which my account has been built up, and have been careful to point out the different degrees of trustworthiness of different portions of my story. Perhaps I have been so anxious to make it clear when my record is of doubtful value that sometimes I may have laid undue stress on its uncertainties and deficiencies.

121 I have tried to make a clear distinction between my
128 description of Toda custom and belief, and any theoretical conclusions drawn by myself, and have kept the latter for sections at the ends of chapters or for special chapters, of which those numbered xi, xix, xxix and xxx are the most important.

It may be thought by some that the book is unduly loaded with minute detail, and I am myself aware that I have often complicated, perhaps even obscured, the story I am telling by the mass of detail with which it is accompanied. I have had,

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121 128 however, no scruples on this score, partly because I wished my readers thoroughly to grasp the nature of the material on which my account is based, but still more, because details which may seem insignificant or trivial are often of great importance in the comparative study of custom and belief.

I have not attempted such a comparative study of Toda institutions. It was often very tempting to suggest resemblances with the practices of other peoples of the present or the past, but the result would have been to swell the book to unwieldy dimensions, and perhaps to have obscured the description of the life of the people. In giving parallels for Toda custom I have therefore limited myself to examples from other parts of India, and even here I have only dealt with a few resemblances which illustrate certain suggestions made in the final chapter on the origin and affinities of the Toda people.

122 In conclusion, I am very glad to express my gratitude for help received from many sources. The researches on which the book is based were undertaken in consequence of the award to myself of the income of the Gunning Fund of the Royal Society for the years 1901–2, and my work was also assisted by a grant from the British Association. In India I received every assistance from those whose official positions gave them the means of helping me, and my thanks are especially due to Mr. Edgar Thurston, whose kind interest and assistance I cannot sufficiently acknowledge. I owe much to the care and attention with which my two interpreters, P. Samuel and Albert Urrilla, performed their duties, and I am greatly indebted to the managers of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society at Ootacamund for the services of the former, and to Mr. C. M. Mullaly and Mr. Hadfield for giving the latter leave from his forest duties in order that he might help me.

125 Of friends in England I am especially indebted to Dr. C. S. Myers, who kindly read nearly the whole of the book in proof; to Syed Ali Bilgrami for information on various points connected with Indian custom; to Don M. da Zilva

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Wickramasinghe for reading Chapter xxv, dealing with the language; and to Mr. H. N. Webber for help, especially in the revision of the genealogical tables.

Most of the illustrations in the book are from photographs taken under my direction by Messrs. Wiele and Klein of Madras, and I am indebted to H.M. India Office for permission to make use of illustrations from the late Colonel Marshall's work *Travels Amongst the Todas*.

W. H. R. R.

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the Todas, and similarly with the names of institutions such as clans, dairies, or ceremonies. The practice of giving Badaga names in their intercourse with Europeans has become so engrained that a Toda invariably uses these names when speaking to a European. During the first few weeks of my work, I received exclusively Badaga names, and to the end of my visit, whenever I visited a new district, the Badaga names would crop up till the people found that I wanted Toda and not Badaga. Kiunievan, who was the chief informant of Mr. Breeks in 1872, is still alive, and when I asked him why he gave Mr. Breeks the Badaga names in every case, he answered "He did not seem to want anything else," and this answer seems to me to give the clue to much of the error which has found its way into many of the accounts which have been given of the Todas.

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One of the most serious errors which has arisen in this way is one connected with the Toda clans. Every account which has been given of the clan-system of the Todas is that of a system which is current among the Badagas as the Toda system, but has only a limited correspondence with the actual system as it is in use among the Todas themselves. Every Toda, if asked by a European to what clan or division he belongs, will promptly give his division according to the Badaga classification, and this has led to the incorporation of this classification in all the accounts of the Todas which deal with their social organisation.

128

Some words are necessary about the general plan of the book. I should have preferred to begin with the social organisation, and to approach the religious aspect of the life of the Todas through the ceremonies accompanying the chief incidents of life, including birth, marriage, and death. The ideas borrowed from the ritual of the dairy, however, so pervade the whole of Toda ceremonial, that I have been obliged to consider the ritual of the dairy at an early stage. After a preliminary chapter sketching the general character and life of the people, I have therefore given a full description of the elaborate ceremonial which centres round the dairy; and on this follow the accounts of other ceremonies and sacred institutions and a general discussion of the

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religion of the people. I then turn to the social aspect of life, and consider kinship, marriage, and the various factors upon which the social organisation depends. Then, after some chapters on diverse topics, I describe the relations of the Todas with the other tribes of the Nilgiris, and in the final chapters discuss certain special problems, including the origin and affinities of the Toda people.

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into more esoteric matters, when only one man was alone with me and was not subject to the restraints imposed by auditors who might disapprove of the utterance of the names of the dead.

One result of the taboo on the names of dead ancestors was that the record of a man's family was never obtained from one of that family; but this was no disadvantage, for the genealogical knowledge of those from whom I obtained my data was so wide that it covered the families of the whole or nearly the whole of the Toda community. I have no doubt that I could have obtained the whole of the material given in the tables from two men, one of whom would have given me the genealogies of the Tartharol, and the other those of the Teivaliol, and if I had chosen my informants wisely, I believe that their information would have been as full and accurate as that obtained from my many sources of information. Further, I found that the Teivaliol had a wide knowledge of Tarthar genealogies, and *vice versâ*, though a man of one division usually refused to guarantee the accuracy of anything he told me about the other division, and would often disclaim knowledge which some chance observation later showed that he possessed, at any rate in some measure.

Although certain Todas had special reputations for their knowledge of pedigrees and were undoubtedly more proficient in this respect than the general mass of the community, I believe that the knowledge was very widely spread throughout the people. My guide Kodrner never professed to any special knowledge of genealogies, and yet chance observations would often show that his acquaintance with the pedigrees of the community was far more extensive and accurate than his professions would have led one to expect.

The results of the inquiry are given in Tables 1–72.[1] This large accumulation of genealogical material was obtained from people who professed at first not to know the names of their own fathers and mothers. It would have been quite easy for me to have come away from the Todas and reported them as a people who did not preserve their genealogies.

The pedigrees are recorded in exactly the same manner as those which I have published in the *Reports of the Torres*

[1] [pp. 749-788]

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128 *Straits Expedition*, with the modifications rendered necessary by the presence of polyandry and infant marriage among the 601 Todas. In any one table the descendants in the male line only are given, descendants in the female line being recorded in the genealogies of the husbands. Thus, if one wishes to ascertain the descendants of Pilivurch in Table 1, it is necessary to turn to Table 20 recording the genealogy of Teithi, the husband of this woman. The names of males are in capital letters, those of females in ordinary type, and the name of a wife always follows the name of her husband or husbands. Under the name of each individual is placed, in italics, the name of the clan to which the individual belongs, or, in the case of a married woman, of the clan to which she had belonged before marriage. The names of those now living are given in Clarendon type, of which Mudrigeidi and Savdur in Table 1 are examples. The abbreviation i.m. stands for "infant marriage." The abbreviations d.y. and d.n.n. stand for "died young" and "died before being named" respectively. The latter implies that the child died within a few weeks of birth.

When the names of men are enclosed in square brackets, polyandry, and when the names of women are so enclosed, polygyny, is indicated.

006 In the *Torres Straits Reports* I have shown that there are definite reasons why the people should have preserved their pedigrees so fully. The pedigrees are not preserved for amusement nor out of idle interest in the doings of ancestors or neighbours. In Torres Straits the complex and far-reaching nature of the marriage regulations form the chief motive for the preservation of the pedigrees, while the transmission of property is perhaps of almost equal importance.

182 Among the Todas we shall see that the marriage regulations are far simpler than among the Papuans of Torres Straits, 423 and in their case the chief motive is probably connected with the inheritance of buffaloes, the only form of property in which the Toda takes much interest. In the succeeding chapters we shall find several examples of social transactions in which the knowledge derived from the genealogical record has determined the issue.

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way he had caught the buffalo at such and such a funeral, and the fact that I knew something of him and his doings often helped to put us at once on friendly terms, and at the same time put him on his mettle to give me the best of the knowledge at his command.

## The Trustworthiness of the Genealogies

Before using the genealogical record as a means of studying the details of the social organisation, it may be well to consider what guarantee we have that the genealogies form a truthful record of the past. In Torres Straits, where I gained my first experience in these matters, I was so incredulous of the accuracy of the record that I obtained almost every particle of information from two or three different and independent sources, and it was only when I had finished that I found the whole mass of material to furnish a record so consistent in itself that it could hardly have been other than veracious.

Further, on investigating kinship and the regulation of marriage, both on the basis of the genealogical record, it was found that the results of one investigation closely corroborated the results of the other, and that the combined investigations gave so consistent and coherent a result that it was incredible that the genealogies on which the investigations were based should have been other than faithful and accurate records.

The Toda community is considerably larger than either of those with which I worked in the islands of Torres Straits, and when I found that the memories of the people extended back as far or nearly as far as in those islands, it became obvious that I was confronted with a task of considerable magnitude, and the question arose whether it was necessary to obtain separate accounts of every family from independent witnesses, as I had done previously, or whether I might not rely on the account of a family given by one witness and only seek corroboration occasionally. I began by following the same procedure as in Torres Straits, but soon found that the accounts obtained independently showed a close

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124 agreement, and I therefore contented myself in my later
128 work with one account, though every now and again I went
173 over a piece of a pedigree with a second witness. When
601 I had finished, the consistency of all the parts of the record with one another seemed to afford conclusive evidence that I had obtained what is, on the whole, a veracious record.

Of course, in so large a mass of material there are mistakes.[1] In one family no doubt a child has been omitted, especially when it died young and had no posterity to make its name important; in another case perhaps a child has been added to a family who was really the offspring of another mother. That there are such mistakes is certain, but they are probably few in number, and I have no doubt that, with one exception to be presently considered, such mistakes as have crept in do not appreciably impair the value of the genealogies as a record of the working of social regulations.

128 There is one deficiency of the record, however, of the
173 existence of which I have little doubt—a deficiency entirely
601 due to my own carelessness. To me the chief interest of the genealogies is that they are a record of the past—a record of the working of social regulations which at the present time may be already affected by the new influences coming into the lives of primitive people all over the world. In my absorption in the records of the past, I have often neglected the present and have omitted to ascertain carefully the children of families at present in process of growth. In several cases I have failed to obtain the names of children of people now living, and I have very little doubt that I have in several or many cases omitted the names of other children of growing families. I had one excuse for this in the fact already mentioned, that I had to obtain my information about a given family from people of some other family. A man would often know all about the members of the given family in the past, but, living perhaps at some distance from the family in question, he was often hazy as to the exact number and names of the children recently born, and it is the record of

[1] For a few cases in which an individual is entered as the child of a man who is known not to be his real father, see p. 534. In such a case I have assigned the child to the parent who is regarded as the legal father by the Todas.

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children under five years of age which I know to be deficient.

If the number of the Todas now living and recorded in the genealogies be counted, it will be found that there are 736 individuals, 419 males and 317 females. In the census of 1901 the total population is given as 805, 451 males and 354 females. My record falls short of that of the census by 69 individuals, 32 males and 37 females.

Further, when I arrange the people now living according to age, it is found that there is a distinct deficiency in children under five years of age. Thus, my records of age come out as follows :—

| | Males. | Females. |
|---|---|---|
| Above 65 years. | 9 | 3 |
| 61—65 ,, | 4 | 7 |
| 56—60 ,, | 19 | 9 |
| 51—55 ,, | 20 | 17 |
| 46—50 ,, | 26 | 21 |
| 41—45 ,, | 26 | 18 |
| 36—40 ,, | 26 | 27 |
| 31—35 ,, | 40 | 25 |
| 26—30 ,, | 40 | 33 |
| 21—25 ,, | 38 | 28 |
| 16—20 ,, | 32 | 31 |
| 11—15 ,, | 41 | 20 |
| 6—10 ,, | 54 | 33 |
| 5 and under | 44 | 45 |
| Total | 419 | 317 |

The ages upon which this table is based could only be obtained very roughly, and the figures must be taken merely as rough approximations to the truth. The irregularities of the table may be due partly to this defect, but it is very improbable that there are about the same number of children of five and under as of children between six and ten, and we may be fairly confident that but for omissions the numbers of the youngest group, especially of boys, would have been larger.

I have reason to believe, further, that I have not omitted any appreciable number of adults or children over five years of age. I tested 320 males and 183 females for colour-

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125 blindness, and as I was anxious to test every member of the
128 community who was old enough, I obtained towards the end of my visit the names of all those who had not been tested. I only attempted to test children when over five years of age, and I have therefore an independent record of the living Todas above this age, so that it is fairly certain that the greater part of the deficiency in the genealogical record is of children about or below the age of five, though it is possible that I may also have missed a certain number of women.

128 This deficiency does not in the slightest degree affect the
173 value of the pedigrees as a record of marriages or of the working of social regulations, but it does impair the value of
601 the statistics concerning the average size of a family and other matters of biological interest, though only for the last generation.

On looking through my genealogical tables, it will be seen that different clans and families differ very greatly in the fulness of their record. In some cases I have pedigrees going back to the great-grandfathers of men now in middle life; in other cases I have only the names of the fathers of such men. The briefness of the record is especially marked in the case of the outlying clans, such as Kwòdrdoni, Pedrkars, and Păm, which I only visited for short periods. During these visits there was so much to be done that something had to suffer and the genealogies were usually the victims. If I had had more time, I have little doubt that I could have obtained much fuller records in many cases.

## Buffalo Pedigrees

124 Marshall has stated that the Todas preserve the pedigrees
173 of their buffaloes in the female line, and when I had found how carefully the Todas preserved their own pedigrees my
234 next step was to endeavour to ascertain if the pedigrees of their buffaloes were preserved with the same amount of care and completeness. I returned to this subject again and again, but with very imperfect success. The Todas always treated my inquiries on this subject as if they were trifling and ridiculous. It is possible that this was one of the points on

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161 seems at present to exist may be due, wholly or in part, to
849 the diminution of infanticide.

163 There is one indication that female infanticide has almost entirely ceased during the last five years, and even that there may now be an excess of female births. In the table of ages given on page 469, it will be seen that the pedigrees record more girls than boys of five years and under. There is no reason why my record of such young children should have been more defective for one sex than for the other, and the proportion here may be approximately correct.

## TWINS

845 Twins are called *ömumokh*, and it is the custom to kill one
847 of them, even when both are boys. If they should be girls, it is probable that both would be killed, or, at any rate, would have been killed in the past.

There is one case of twins in the genealogies. Iraveli, the wife of Kwötuli and Nudriki (8), gave birth to twins about twelve years ago. Both were boys, and I was first told that one had died shortly after birth, but later inquiries made it almost certain that the boy had been killed. Some time after the birth of the twins, one of the buffaloes of Kwötuli and Nudriki is said to have had a calf with one body, two heads, and four legs. The buffalo died before the calf was born, and the monstrosity was found by the Kotas, to whom the body was given. It was generally expected that something would happen to Kwötuli or Nudriki, but they have since been very prosperous.

## THE DETERMINATION OF AGE

805 This is a suitable place to say a word about the method I
128 adopted to ascertain the ages of the Todas. Like all people at a low stage of culture, the Todas are very uncertain about their ages, though their knowledge is more accurate than that of many peoples. Every Toda knows, however, whether he is older or younger than another, this fact determining the

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names and salutations they give to one another, as we shall see in the next chapter. A few of the younger men seemed to have accurate knowledge of their ages, and building up on this basis, and with a knowledge of the relative ages of the different members of the community, it became possible to arrive at estimates which probably do not deviate very widely from the correct ages; even in the case of the older people, I do not believe that my estimated ages are likely to be more than five years out in any case. As already mentioned (see p. 416), the Todas make use, in the estimation of age, of their belief in the eighteen-year period of a flower, and the ages so estimated in a few cases agreed fairly with those arrived at in other ways.

Among those now alive, it seemed that the usual time which separates the birth of two children of the same mother is about three years, and I have taken this time as the rule in estimating the ages of all those whose names are included in the genealogies. Similarly, so far as I could tell, women begin to bear children when about eighteen to twenty years of age.

The ages of the four groups given in the table on p. 474 were calculated on the assumptions that a woman had her first child when twenty years old, and that the interval between the births of two children was three years.

The oldest Toda now living is Kiugi (57). He looks an extremely old man, and is said by the Todas to be nearly a hundred years of age. There is evidence which makes it probable that he is at least eighty or ninety. Kòrs, the father of Kiugi, performed the *pursültpimi* ceremony before the birth of Teitchi (52) (see p. 564). Teitchi's grandson, Kuriolv, is now about fifty-four years of age. When Kòrs gave the bow and arrow he may have been only a young boy, and if we assume that he was fifteen years old, that Teitchi and Pareivan had their first children when twenty years old, and that the interval between the birth of Pilzink and that of Pareivan was six years, it would make the age of Kòrs, if he were still alive, 115. If Kiugi was born when his father was twenty years old, it would make his age ninety-five. If, on the other hand, we assume that Kòrs gave the bow and arrow when

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128 only ten years of age, and that he did not have his first
165 child till he was thirty, it would make Kiugi's age eighty. Kiugi's eldest child, if alive, would now probably be about sixty, and this supports the view that the lowest possible estimate of Kiugi's age is eighty, and he is not improbably a good deal older.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda



untutored races, to realise justly and without exaggeration, what it really is, and—by analogy—what it must have been in the pre-historic era, long ere 'Adam delved and Eve spun,' *before man had much developed in manly qualities.*

I have actually witnessed most of the scenes here described. Such of the remainder as are not otherwise authorised, I have compiled from direct narrative of the most reliable Todas.

Whilst hoping, though not without some misgivings, that the ugly statistics collected with so much care, and the speculations advanced to account physiologically for the origin of obscure customs, may have some slight value, even to the savant, I am sanguine that the antique practices now brought to light, and the illustrations I have attempted of every-day life, may render the book acceptable to the general reader. I may say, that great and especial pains have been taken to render as large a portion of the work as the subject permits, attractive, and suited for ladies' reading.

A few words of explanation are perhaps called for; to account for my having devoted an entire chapter to the description of some of the first principles of phrenology—a subject which is fully treated in standard works by acknowledged authorities. I wished primarily, to show the premises forming the basis for many conjectures which otherwise would have borne too much the appearance of dogmatism, or that might have been misunderstood. Secondly, I desired to show for phrenology, a marked practical value for ethnological purposes: and no single work containing, with clearness

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and brevity combined, so much information calculated to be serviceable to enquirers disposed to pursue the phrenologic mode of enquiry into the nature of barbarous races, which I have here faintly attempted; I trusted that the chapter might be useful, in some sort, as a manual for ethnographers so circumstanced.

But in this matter, as indeed throughout the book, I must trust very much to the lenient judgment of my readers; if, as a solitary Indian, far away from contact with men of science, but fresh from the actual and impressive presence of 'nature's children,' in attempting to work out for myself some of the vastly interesting unsolved problems of our day, I air some seemingly quaint ideas. *The public is concerned simply in their truth.*

The publication of these results of investigations made two years ago, has been delayed through the impossibility of finding in a very hot climate, and in the intervals of official duties, leisure sufficient for completing a subject demanding much thought and care.

I beg to invite especial attention to the important contributions made by the eminent philologist and great Tamil scholar, the Rev. G. U. POPE, D.D., at present Head Master of the 'Bishop Cotton' School at Bangalore. These will be found both in the form of foot-notes throughout this little work, and forming a distinct chapter at the end. The interesting and often most valuable derivations of Toda words given in these notes, have enabled me, in the absence of other evidence, to explain several customs and to work out some speculations that otherwise seemed quite incomprehensible.

10:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1937) 1938
AW60 Toda AW60



for short or longer periods has however been passed and with changed political conditions it is evident that the European population will suffer a decline. Well-to-do Indians have also felt the attractions, climatic or other, of the Nilgiri hill-stations: whether the climax of their migration has been reached it is difficult to say. The specific differences between the influences of Rivers' time and those of today are to be seen, not so much in the influence exerted on the hill cultures by the Europeans, as in the ever-increasing numbers of Indians from the plains, mostly low-caste Tamil and Kannada speakers who are agricultural laborers, but also Mohammedans from various areas, including Pashto-speaking money-lenders from the far north, as well as traders, especially Marwaris from the Bombay Presidency and Chettis from the Tamil area.

It will throw some light on the nature of Toda culture if an attempt is made to assess the effects of these various influences on the life of the Todas, insofar as there has been an effect. A general examination of changes that have taken place in Toda culture since Rivers' time will also be of value, both in itself and as providing evidence by which some of Rivers' hypotheses may be evaluated. The treatment may be divided into three major sections—economic life, social organization, and religion. At some points a comparison may usefully be made between the state of Toda culture at the present time and the state of the Kota and the Badaga cultures in the corresponding departments.

The economic life of the Todas is that department which has felt the impact of outside influences most strongly. The basis on which the economic life is founded is the herds of buffaloes. A great part of the diet of the tribe is made up of milk, buttermilk, and ghee. In this respect incidentally they offer a marked contrast to most of the south Indian communities, among whom cattle-products are too frequently neglected as a source of nourishing food. Besides this, the Todas require grain-food and of these rice and millet are the chief. In the days before the hills were opened up, grain was acquired from the Badagas chiefly, and the method, still followed, was for a Toda to go to the Badaga village with which his sib was connected and levy contributions, so much from each house. Rice seems to have been obtained

12:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938)1941 AW60 Toda AW60

# LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL FORMS: A STUDY OF TODA KINSHIP TERMS AND DUAL DESCENT

By M. B. EMENEAU

121 THAT THE DATA obtained by linguistic investigation of any community is of indispensable value for the ethnographer studying that community has long been axiomatic for the anthropological school of which Sapir was a brilliant member. His statement of the point in *The Status of Linguistics as a Science* deserves to be quoted:

> Language is becoming increasingly valuable as a guide to the scientific study of a given culture. In a sense, the network of cultural patterns of a civilization is indexed in the language which expresses that civilization. It is an illusion to think that we can understand the significant outlines of a culture through sheer observation and without the guide of the linguistic symbolism which makes these outlines significant and intelligible to society. Some day the attempt to master a primitive culture without the help of the language of its society will seem as amateurish as the labors of a historian who cannot handle the original documents of the civilization which he is describing.[1]

To go a little further and say that the culminating item of value that the linguistic student can give to ethnology is the study of a community's most highly verbalized cultural manifestations would be what Sapir would and undoubtedly did hold. It is here, in their verbal art-forms, stories, songs, oratory, or the like, that the members of the culture give the most overt and self-conscious expression to the patterns which they follow or profess to follow in their life. Linguistic study, if it is confined to its primary object of recording and analyzing the forms of utterances and never goes beyond that, can offer little to ethnology. It must, with that analysis as a basis, go on to a strict philological analysis of well-recorded and fully guaranteed texts in the forms most highly esteemed by the culture, and the results of such study should provide then "the linguistic symbolism which makes these outlines [of a culture gained through sheer observation] significant and intelligible."

121 The following study presents the kinship system of the Todas of the Nilgiris in South
● 128 India. In a previous paper on *Toda Marriage Regulations and Taboos*, the existence was re-
614 ported of a complete division of the Todas into matrilineal sibs alongside of the previously known complete division into patrilineal sibs. In this paper I present, following on the kinship system, the material on the functions of the two sib-systems as against one another. In
[114] these sections an attempt has been made to use the evidence provided by the Toda art-form of highest prestige, the songs. Discussion based on this evidence is found on pp. 160–161 on the use of "friend" terms beside kinship terms, on p. 165 on the special kinship term used by a woman for the wife of her husband's brother by the same father, and throughout the Appendix, which presents the kinship terms; and again on pp. 169–172, where the data on the

[1] Edward Sapir, *The Status of Linguistics as a Science* (Language, Vol. 5, pp. 207–14, 1929), p. 209.

12:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938)1941 AW60 Toda AW60



emotional attitude of the Todas towards their matrilineal sib-system is presented. It is thought that in this use of song material the "amateurish" methodology against which Sapir protested has been avoided, and some light has been thrown upon Toda institutions in a way which he would have approved. The study ends with some discussion of the bearing of the Todas' dual descent system on the historical question of their "origin," which has engaged the attention of most of those who have studied them.

Rivers' account of the kinship system of the Todas is essentially correct.[1] Linguistic research with this tribe has added little but detail to our knowledge of this department of the tribal institutions, except in the important matter of dual descent, which escaped Rivers' meticulous investigations.[2] In this paper I shall present the kinship terms in correct linguistic shape, and shall make the few factual corrections that are necessary. The main body of the paper will be devoted to a discussion of the dual descent system.

The most important factual correction in Rivers' account relates to the age distinctions made in the kinship system. He records three age-groups in ɛoo's generation based on age relative to that of ɛoo.[4] In fact, the system makes only two distinctions. There is a dichotomy on the basis of age relative to ɛoo. An elder brother or male parallel cousin in either patrilineal or matrilineal sib or outside them (son of ɛoo's mother's clan-sister) is on in reference, opɑ: in address; an elder sister or female parallel cousin related in the same ways is okn in reference, okɑ: in address. A younger sibling or parallel cousin related in the same ways, without distinction of sex, is -ɵɯɾ-fed in reference, with the appropriate pronominal form preceding, and endɑ: in address. En-ɵɯɾ-fed is "my younger sibling," literally "one who was born with, or after, me;" nɯn-ɵɯɾ-fed "your younger sibling," ɑn-ɵɯɾ-fed (or ɑn-dɑn-ɵɯɾ-fed) "his or her younger sibling," om-ɵɯɾ-fed "our (inclusive) younger sibling," em-ɵɯɾ-fed "our (exclusive) younger sibling," nɯm-ɵɯɾ-fed "your (plural) younger sibling;" "their younger sibling" is the same as "his or her" or ɑðɑ m-ɵɯɾ-fed. If the sex of the person referred to must be indicated, -mox added to any of the forms signifies a male, -ɾu ɪx (= ku ɪx) a female.[5]

[1] W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 483–501 for the kinship terms. The volume is referred to in this paper as Rivers. In mentioning members of the tribe by name a number is frequently added in brackets after the name; this refers to the corresponding genealogical table in Rivers.

[2] See M. B. Emeneau, *Toda Marriage Regulations and Taboos* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 39, pp. 103–12, 1937) for a detailed account of the matrilineal sibs which are found within the moieties and cut across the well-known division into patrilineal sibs. In the present paper I employ the same system of phonemic writing that was used in that paper, with the corrections made in my later paper *Personal Names of the Todas* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 40, pp. 205–23, 1938), p. 205 fn. 1. In this paper I use š, ž for palatalized alveolar sibilants, c, ɟ for post-dental affricates and č, ǰ for palatalized post-dental affricates; ɯ is a high, back, unrounded vowel. Acknowledgments are due again to the American Council of Learned Societies for aid in my field-work in 1935–36 and to the American Philosophical Society (Penrose Fund) for aid in 1936–38.

[4] Pp. 486 bottom, 487, and *passim*.

[5] Rivers, p. 487, said: "I do not know whether the children of two women of the same generation in [a patrilineal sib] would call one another brother and sister." The terms are extended to all children of women whom ɛoo would refer to as mother, whether they are in his patrilineal or matrilineal sib, or outside them. The term

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## CHAPTER 3

# THE POLYANDRY OF THE TODAS OF THE NILGIRIS

114 It has often been said that the Todas are the best known aboriginal community in the world. Every general treatise on anthropology is supposed to make at least a passing reference to them, and it is certainly true that data concerning them in very widely quoted in ethnological literature the world over. This, to a large extent, is due to the excellent work done among them by that distinguished British anthropologist, the late Dr W. H. R. Rivers. His book, *The Todas* (see Bibliography), is a classic on the subject, and its voluminous contents cover to a remarkable degree all those aspects of their culture which it was possible to investigate with the contemporary ethnographical means at the disposal of the author. Since then, much progress has been made in this field, and, as I was able to note when with the Todas, the store of information which they can offer is still very far from being exhausted. From this point of view, as from many others, they are truly a most remarkable people, worthy of continued anthropological attention.

[127] During my first visit to the Nilgiris, my time was mostly taken up with making the acquaintance of the tribe. I read Rivers on the spot and looked into the polyandry of the people in a general fashion. I also got to know the neighbouring inhabitants, without a knowledge of whom it is difficult to acquite a proper functional picture of Toda culture, so closely is the latter bound up with that of others, especially in ceremonial and economic matters. On my return, ten years later, I delved more deeply into polyandry, and, in order to get a thorough working knowledge of this form of the marriage institution as practised by the Nilgiri tribe, made a specialized study of one single family, in which two successive generations of men had had quite a considerable number of children born in this type of wedlock.

[128] In this chapter, on the polyandry of the Todas of the Nilgiris, I shall deal first with the general study which I made in 1939, and follow on

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with the special study that is the result of my second visit to south India in 1949.

## A. GENERAL STUDY: THE TODAS OF THE NILGIRIS

A general study of the culture of the Todas of the Nilgiris has been presented so well by Dr W. H. R. Rivers in his book that it is quite unnecessary to repeat it here. Readers who are interested in getting to know these people thoroughly are referred to the work, which they will find quite absorbing reading.

In the following paragraphs I propose to give only an outline of the principal traits of Tota culture so that what follows should be intelligible. Some of the Toda institutions are so unique, or as we would say anthropologically, aberrant, that it is absolutely essential to have at least some idea of what they are like in order to understand the nature of the whole.

I will, therefore, first give this outline of Toda culture with a brief description of the habitat and social organisation of the tribe, and go on next, in a second paragraph to describe those customs of the Todas which, in my opinion, have a direct bearing on their institution of polyandrous marriage. Being by inclination functionalist in anthropological outlook, I can quite see that their marriage customs are linked to the entirety of their culture, and even, to some extent, to those of their immediate neighbours, with whom their ties are very close. But it would be too long and too complex to attempt to give so vast a picture of the whole intricate and inter-related pattern, and I would ask my readers to content themselves with the choice of those items of culture which I consider relevant in this connection.

A third paragraph, before we go on to the special study of one Toda polyandrous family, which I reserve for Part B of this section, will deal more closely with Toda polyandry, treating in a general description, all those aspects of it which I was able to gather during my first stay in the Nilgiris in 1939.

### 1. DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINE

The mountainous district of the Nilgiris is part of the State of Madras, in south India. The name, which means "Blue Mountains" in Sanskrit, is derived from the fact that, seen from the plains, the nearly 9,000

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In religion, the Todas are definitely not Hindu. They do go on pilgrimage to Hindu shrines, and their diviners have some sort of esoteric contact with temples in Malabar. But the Toda faith is not of the orthodox Hindu kind, and their gods have quite different names and natures.[1]

Today, the Toda gods are very hazy figures. What has happened is that with the passage of time, ritual has come to play so important a part in religious practices, that a clear conception of the deities is now quite beyond the Todas. From the elders whom I questioned (especially Ujar, 48)[2] – they are the only persons who know something about this nowadays – I obtained, however, information concerning an intricate and rich mythology. This describes an early period in which the gods moved freely with men in the Nilgiris. They led the same kind of pastoral life as the latter do today, caring for their herds of buffaloes and processing their milk in their dairy-temples. Only some of these gods are reputed to be still present on the plateau, each living on the summit of a distinctive hill.

It will not be necessary to enlarge here upon the Toda religion. Rivers' account of it, to which readers are again referred, is, broadly speaking, accurate and exhaustive, and will be enough to give a very good idea of its nature. The principal gods most frequently mentioned by the Todas and about whom it will be sufficient to know in the present connection are the following: 1) *Ön*, the Lord of the Underworld (*Amnor*) to which he retired after a long period in the Nilgiris; while he was still living there, he created, together with his wife, *Pinakursh*, men (*Olkh* = Todas) as well as the Toda sacred buffaloes; 2) *Terkish*, the sister of Ön; she is by far the leading Toda deity, amounting to a protective tribal mother-goddess, of whom you hear continually; she is reputed to have stayed behind in the Nilgiris when Ön retired to Amnor; she has her earthly residence at the summit of a hill called Tödhut near Ootacamund; the Todas say that she is, however, omnipresent, to be found anywhere in the world; in their language, the Blue Mountains are called after her, *Terkishnor*, or the land of Terkish.

[1] During my last stay in the Nilgiris, it was my good fortune to discover what appeared to me to be eleven Sumerian deities among the six hundred or so gods and goddesses which compose the Toda pantheon, something which would go to indicate a very early cultural connection indeed with the world of Antiquity (*Possible Sumerian Survivals in Toda Ritual*, by the same author, see Bibliography).

[2] Whenever a Toda name is followed by a number such as here, the latter refers to the corresponding genealogical table in *The Todas*, by W. H. R. Rivers.